DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 276 556 RC 016 018

AUTHOR Fenton, Ray; Crumb, Jeanmarie
TITLE Alaskan Native Early School Leavers: Update.
INSTITUTION Anchorage School District, AK.
PUB DATE 11 Jun 84
NOTE 26p.; For the 1982 study, see ED 247 064.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Persistence; *Alaska Natives; *American Indian Education; Attendance; *Dropout Characteristics; *Dropout Prevention; Dropout Rate; Dropouts; Influences; Parent School Relationship; *Program Effectiveness; Relevance (Education); School Districts; School Holding Power; School Surveys; Secondary Education; Student Attitudes; *Student Attrition; Student Needs; Student School Relationship; Withdrawal (Education)
IDENTIFIERS *Alaska (Anchorage)

ABSTRACT

The number of American Indian and Alaska Native students who leave the Anchorage School District without graduating or transferring to another school system has shown a slight but steady decline since the completion of "Alaskan Native Early School Leavers Study" in May 1982. The reasons for students leaving school have remained much the same--poor attendance, poor grades, and problems that arise at home or in the community. The District has made some positive changes in the areas that were identified in the "School Leavers Study," and more changes are being considered. The staff in District secondary schools who work most closely with students who are in trouble are making an effort to help students and to keep parents informed. The Indian Education Program community counselors and Cook Inlet Native Association staff work with other staff within their units and have direct contact with most of the students who are in trouble prior to their withdrawal from the District. This report includes tables showing dropout rates by ethnic group and reason for dropout and a survey of school leavers listing school, grade, means of contacting parent, reason for exit, and destination. (JHZ)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

11-26-86

ED276556

ALASKAN NATIVE EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS: UPDATE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Ray Fenton

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Ray Fenton, Research Associate
Assessment and Evaluation

Jeanmarie Crumb, Director
Community Relations

June 11, 1984

RC016018

EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS UPDATE

An indepth study of reasons for American Indian and Alaska Native students leaving school prior to graduation and without transferring to another school was completed in May, 1982 and reported to the School Board (ASD Memorandum #435). The study included a review of District statistics on dropouts, interviews with Native students who had left school and returned, and a limited number of interviews with dropouts who could be contacted in the Anchorage area. The study found that the Alaska Native and American Indian students constituted about 8% of the student body and contributed about 16% to the number of dropouts.

Tables 1 through 5 were prepared by the Anchorage School District Management Information Systems Department to show the number and proportion of students classified as dropouts by the Student Records Department for 1980-81, 1981-82, 1982-83, and through May 31 of the 1983-84 school year. Table 1 shows that for all students the percent of dropouts as a proportion of the September 30 student membership has declined over the past four years from 3.14% in 1980-81 to 2.74% in 1983-84. This is a small but positive change.

Tables 2 through 5 breakdown the number of dropouts for each of the four school years by ethnic group and by reason for dropout. These tables show the pattern of reasons coded for leaving school. The proportion of students contributed to the total number of dropouts has remained relatively stable from year to year for Alaska Native and American Indians. Native dropouts constituted 18.6% of the dropouts in 1980-81, 17.1% in 1981-82, 16.6% in 1982-83, and 16.7% in 1983-84. These percentages represent 214 students in 1980-81, 194 students in 1981-82, 197 students in 1982-83, and 185 students in 1983-84.

Most of the American Indian and Alaska Native students who are classified as dropouts by the Anchorage School District are students who have been withdrawn from school due to non-attendance. The group constituted 79% of the Alaska Native dropouts in 1980-81, 73% in 1981-82, 77% for 1982-83, and 69% for 1983-84.

The number of withdrawals for non-attendance may increase slightly for 1983-84 since record changes for the last few days of the year have not yet been processed, but the increase would be slight.

Assessment and Evaluation Department staff interviewed Attendance and Discipline principals in each of the regular District high schools and held conversations with Cook Inlet Native Association tutors and Anchorage School District Indian Education community counselors to discover what contacts had been made with dropouts and their parents. Interviewers asked about each student withdrawn from school and recorded what they were told. Formal attempts were made to contact students at all schools and there was no case where there had not been

an active attempt to trace missing students and contact parents. In schools with Indian Education Program community counselors, the school administrators relied heavily on these staff members to contact students and parents and provide counseling. Cook Inlet Native Association staff played this same role in some of the schools which do not have Indian Education Program community counselors.

The chart presented as Table 6 shows that there was a good deal of contact with most of the students who left school. It was also reassuring to find that the principals and other staff members demonstrated a good deal of familiarity with the problems of the individual students. Comments showed concern with the students and what happened to them after they left school. In many cases, there were ongoing contacts with the withdrawn students and the students had either been helped to find entry into a G.E.D. Program or were expected to return to school.

The problems that were reported for early school leavers in 1983-84 closely parallel those that were reported in the Alaskan Native Early School Leavers: A Study with Recommendations. The first and most general problem was non-attendance which remains more of a problem for Alaskan Native students than for members of any other ethnic group within the District. A second and related problem is the failure of students to successfully complete courses and receive the academic credits necessary to graduate. A third problem is that for some students there are home and community pressures that make it hard to do what is required for success in school.

Alaskan Native Early School Leavers: A Study with Recommendations concluded with a set of recommendations that were gathered from students, District staff and members of the community. These recommendations included:

1. New Student Orientation for Native Students
2. Alternative Credit Granting Options
3. Career Education and Counseling
4. Culturally Relevant Courses and Activities
5. Teacher In-Service Training
6. Counseling
7. Attendance and Suspension Policy Revisions

The report and recommendations were discussed with the School Board and circulated to the principals of secondary schools and other members of the District staff.

Some changes have taken place in the two school years since the completion of the Alaskan Native Early School Leavers Study. The Indian Education Program has increased the opportunities for students to complete courses through independent study at East and West High Schools. More students are involved in activities sponsored by the Indian Education Program than ever before. Career Resource Centers are active within all of the regular secondary schools and the counseling program is in the process of change and improvement. Computerized attendance systems have been installed and Indian Education and Cook Inlet Native Association staff have reports of Native student attendance readily available.

Indian Education Program staff reports that there has been an increase in the number of Native students who have successfully graduated this year (see Table 7). They attribute the increase in the number of students graduating to an improved attitude toward school on the part of many Native students and the increased ability of students to make-up credits at East and West. Indian Education Program tallies of the number of Native graduates supports the increase in the success rate of Native students.

Conclusion:

The number of American Indian and Alaska Native students who leave the Anchorage School District without graduating or transferring to another school system has shown a slight, but steady, decline over the years since the Alaskan Native Early School Leavers Study was completed. The proportion of Native students who dropout remains higher than that for any other ethnic group within the Anchorage School District.

The reasons for students leaving school has remained much the same; poor attendance, poor grades, and problems that arise at home or in the community. The District has made some positive changes in the areas that were identified in the Alaskan Native Early School Leavers Study and there are more changes that are now being considered which may have a notable effect of Alaska Native students.

The staff in District secondary schools who work most closely with students who are in trouble are making an effort to help students and to keep parents informed. The Indian Education Program community counselors and Cook Inlet Native Association staff work with other staff within their units and have direct contact with most of the students who are in trouble prior to their withdrawal from the District.

There is a good deal being done to work with American Indian and Alaska Native students who are in trouble but the number of students who leave school prior to graduation remains high. The statistics on dropouts point out that some improvement has been made but that there is still much which remains to be done to improve the success rate of the District in graduating Native students.

Table 1

Anchorage School District Dropout Summary

Grades K-12

1980-81 -- 1983-84

School Year	Sept. 30 Membership	Number of Dropouts, Gr. K-12	% of Sept. 30 Membership
1980-81	36,737	1,152	3.14%
1981-82	37,357	1,138	3.05%
1982-83	39,291	1,181	3.01%
1983-84	40,427	1,107	2.74%

Table 2

Anchorage School District Dropout Summary

Grades K-12

1983-84 School Year

Racial/Ethnic Classification	Illness	Academic Difficulty	Behavior Difficulty	Economic	Marital	Parental Influence	Referal to Another Agency	Non Attendance	Total
Alaska Native	1	4	5	1		14	25	113	163 (14.7%)
American Indian		2	1			3	1	15	22 (2.0%)
Asian			1					14	15 (1.4%)
Black		2	2			5	8	40	57 (5.1%)
Filipino							1	3	5 (0.4%)
Spanish		1	2			2	1	25	30 (2.7%)
White	4	31	19	6	1	68	95	590	816 (73.7%)
TOTAL	5 (0.5%)	41 (3.7%)	31 (2.8%)	7 (0.6%)	1 (0.1%)	92 (8.3%)	131 (11.8%)	799 (72.2%)	1107 (100%)

Table 3

Anchorage School District Dropout Summary

Grades K-12

1982-83 School Year

Racial/Ethnic Classification	Illness	Academic Difficulty	Behavior Difficulty	Economic	Marital	Parental Influence	Referal to Another Agency	Non Attendance	Total
Alaska Native	1	7	4	1		15	9	124	161 (13.6%)
American Indian		1	2			3	3	27	36 (3.0%)
Asian				1			1	12	14 (1.2%)
Black		6	3			7	6	57	79 (6.7%)
Filipino							2	7	9 (0.8%)
Spanish		2	3		1	2	1	18	27 (2.3%)
White	1	48	27	24	2	60	106	567	855 (72.4%)
TOTAL	2 (0.2%)	64 (5.4%)	39 (3.9%)	26 (2.2%)	3 (0.3%)	87 (7.4%)	128 (10.8%)	832 (70.4%)	1,181 (100%)

Table 4

Anchorage School District Dropout Summary

Grades K-12

1981-82 School Year

Racial/Ethnic Classification	Illness	Academic Difficulty	Behavior Difficulty	Economic	Marital	Parental Influence	Referal to Another Agency	Non Attendance	Total
Alaska Native	1	5	2	1	1	13	22	122	167 (14.7%)
American Indian			2			4	1	20	27 (2.4%)
Asian							2	4	6 (0.5%)
Black		6	1	1		7	9	38	62 (5.4%)
Filipino				1	1			3	5 (0.4%)
Spanish			2			4	1	13	20 (1.8%)
White	4	47	24	26	7	108	131	504	851 (74.8%)
TOTAL	5 (0.5%)	58 (5.1%)	31 (2.7%)	29 (2.5%)	9 (0.8%)	136 (11.9%)	166 (14.6%)	704 (61.9%)	1,138 (100%)

Table 5

Anchorage School District Dropout Summary

Grades K-12

1980-81 School Year

Racial/Ethnic Classification	Illness	Academic Difficulty	Behavior Difficulty	Economic	Marital	Parental Influence	Referal to Another Agency	Non Attendance	Total
Alaska Native	3	5	6	7		3	20	157	201 (17.5%)
American Indian				1		1		11	13 (1.1%)
Asian		1					1	5	7 (0.6%)
Black		1	7	2		2	11	45	68 (5.9%)
Filipino							1	2	3 (0.3%)
Spanish		1	1	1		1	3	14	21 (1.8%)
White	2	41	27	42	10	70	102	545	839 (72.8%)
TOTAL	5 (0.4%)	49 (4.3%)	41 (3.6%)	53 (4.6%)	10 (0.8%)	77 (6.7%)	138 (12.0%)	779 (67.6%)	1,152 (100%)

Table 6

SCHOOL LEAVER SURVEY

SCHOOL	GRADE	PARENT CONTACTED? (Mail/phone/pers. conf)	REASON FOR EXIT?	DESTINATION
BARTLETT	10	Mail, phone, personal conference.	Non-attendance. Doesn't know how to commit herself educationally; lacking direction.	Working. Signed up for summer school.
BARTLETT	10	Mail, phone, personal conference.	Non-attendance. Older sister leader; instability at home; doesn't know how to commit herself educationally; lacking direction.	Signed up for summer school.
BARTLETT	10	Mail, phone, personal conference attempts made but parents did not come.	Behavioral, parents have lost control of student.	G.E.D., mother said will get job.
BARTLETT	11	Mail, phone, personal conference.	Non-attendance, home instability.	Working.
BARTLETT	11	Mail, phone, personal conference.	Non-attendance.	Working on return to Bartlett.
BARTLETT	11	Mail, phone, personal conference.	Non-attendance. Family problems.	Working plans to re-enter.
BARTLETT	12	Personal conference.	Parental, "want kid to go on trip."	Graduate with ACC diploma program.
BARTLETT	12	Mail, phone, personal conference--very extensive efforts.	Non-attendance; comes to school just to "hang out," possibly on drugs, "senioritis."	Unknown.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SCHOOL	GRADE	PARENT CONTACTED? (Mail/phone/pers. conf)	REASON FOR EXIT?	DESTINATION
BARTLETT	9	Mail, phone, personal conference.	Behavioral.	Runaway--police record.
CHUGIAK HIGH	10	Student contacted often; 5 truancy notices to parents (hand-carried); 2 contacts by mail; letter sent home for withdrawal.	Non-attendance; 24 absences; withdrawn 4-4-84, family problems.	Foster parent to foster parent.
CHUGIAK HIGH	11	Numerous contacts; 9 written and mailed for tardies/absences; 2 phone; 1 personal conference; 2 hand-carried for truancy/attendance.	Non-attendance; withdrawn 1-4-84.	Unknown.
CHUGIAK HIGH	11	1 written notification of withdrawal; no phone; just address.	Non-attendance; 10 absences of 16 enrolled; perennial attendance problem; opted for other program; withdrawn 11-3-83.	G.E.D. (18 yrs)
CHUGIAK HIGH	12	7 written notices to home; 3 hours conference time with student.	Parental problems; non-attendance; withdrawn 5-11-84.	ACC equivalency diploma; working; out of house.
DIMOND-MEARS	10	Mail, phone, personal.	Attendance; behavioral; drugs.	Working for father.
DIMOND-MEARS	10	Mail. Personal contacts with parent.	Attendance.	Anchorage.
DIMOND-MEARS	11	Mail, phone, personal.	Drugs.	Barrow (with mother).
DIMOND-MEARS	11	Unknown.	Correspondence.	Unknown.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SCHOOL	GRADE	PARENT CONTACTED? (Mail/phone/pers. conf)	REASON FOR EXIT?	DESTINATION
DIMOND-MEARS	11	Mail, phone, personal.	Drugs, runaway.	Anchorage.
DIMOND-MEARS	12	Counselor working with parent.	Drugs.	Anchorage.
DIMOND-MEARS	8	Mail, phone, parents.	Attendance. Family problems.	Unknown.
DIMOND-MEARS	9	Mail, phone, parents. Personal conference.	Drugs, runaway. Personal problems, Family problems.	Anchorage.
DIMOND-MEARS	9	Mail, phone, parent. Personal conference.	Attendance, drugs. Family problems.	Runaway or home. St. George.
EAST	10	Mail, phone, personal conference by JOM and IEA; referral to CINA/JOM.	Non-attendance, mother unable to cope.	Received summer school application.
EAST	10	Phone, referral to Special Education.	Too long in wrong classes, not tested soon enough for Sp. Ed.; frustration.	Unknown.
EAST	10	Mail, phone (several times), parent conference, IEA referral to JOM counselor.	Last year it was school phobia, mother can't cope--alcoholism.	Home.
EAST	10	Personal contact by IEA, referral to JOM counselor.	Drugs, non-attendance, family problems, alcohol.	Home.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SCHOOL	GRADE	PARENT CONTACTED? (Mail/phone/pers. conf)	REASON FOR EXIT?	DESTINATION
EAST	10	Mail, phone, numerous personal contacts, referral to JOM counselor.	Non-attendance, alcohol--drugs, staying out all night.	Received summer school application.
EAST	10	Mail, phone, personal conference, special education conference.	Non-attendance, alcohol, instability in family.	Unknown.
EAST	10	Mail, phone, personal conference.	Non-attendance, pregnancy.	Whaley Center
EAST	11	Mail, phone, numerous personal contacts--IEA.	Non-attendance.	Went for GED.
EAST	11	Mail, phone, personal contact.	Non-attendance, family problems, alcohol.	Home.
EAST	11	Mail, phone (several times), numerous personal conferences, IEA.	Attendance suspension (twice), 45 day suspension for drugs--did not want to go through drug program again.	Living at home and looking for a job--going to go for GED.
EAST	11	Mail, phone, personal conference.	Non-attendance, family problems.	Unknown.
EAST	11	Unknown.	Unknown.	Unknown.
EAST	12	Mail, phone, personal conference, IEA--referral to JOM counselor.	Non-attendance, family unstable, all but youngest sister has dropped out.	Unknown.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SCHOOL	GRADE	PARENT CONTACTED? (Mail/phone/pers. conf)	REASON FOR EXIT?	DESTINATION
EAST	12	Mail, phone, conferences.	Non-attendance. Older student. Decided to get G.E.D.	Anchorage. (Special Education student.) GED from ACC.
EAST	12	Mail, phone, personal conference by Special Education counselor.	Non-attendance, family problems, school frustration, older student.	Unknown.
EAST	12	Unknown.	Unknown.	Unknown.
EAST	12	Personal conference by Special Education counselor.	Unknown.	Unknown.
EAST	12	Mail, phone.	Drug problems, family problems, stepdad, some abuse.	Unknown.
EAST	12	Mail, phone, personal conference, referral to JOM.	Unknown.	Unknown.
EAST	12	Mail, phone, personal conference.	Non-attendance. Attending SAVE II.	Anchorage. SAVE II.
EAST	12	Mail, phone, personal contacts.	Non-attendance. Personal problems.	Anchorage.
EAST	12	Numerous contacts, J.O.M. referral.	Adult problems, alcohol.	Unknown.
EAST	12	Numerous contacts, J.O.M. referral.	School too big, personal problems.	Unknown.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SCHOOL	GRADE	PARENT CONTACTED? (Mail/phone/pers. conf)	REASON FOR EXIT?	DESTINATION
EAST	9	Mail, numerous personal contacts, IEA.	Attendance problems. Family.	Unknown.
EAST	9	Personal, many contacts, IEA, referral to JOM.	Moving, mother's health.	Leaving for California this summer.
EAST	9	Mail, many contacts, referral to J.O.M.	Attendance problems. Family problems.	Unknown.
EAST	9	Mail, phone.	Non-attendance. Family problems.	Unknown.
EAST	9	Home visit, phone.	Family problem, attendance.	Whittier.
EAST	9	Mail, phone, numerous contacts by IEA, special education.	Non-attendance, alcohol, family contacts.	Anchorage.
SERVICE	10	4-6 absences--mail; 10 absences--probation letter; phonep parent initiated conference; alternative schools; David Sam, CINA.	Non-attendance.	Anchorage.
SERVICE	10	Contact with family.	McLaughlin.	Anchorage.
SERVICE	11	4-6 absences--mail; 10 absences--probation letter; phone; parent initiated conference; alternative schools; David Sam, CINA.	Non-attendance.	Working Burger King, Anchorage.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SCHOOL	GRADE	PARENT CONTACTED? (Mail/phone/pers. conf)	REASON FOR EXIT?	DESTINATION
SERVICE	11	Mail.	Runaway.	Stolen car; police involved.
SERVICE	12	Mail.	Non-attendance; runaway.	4th Street.
SERVICE	12	Mail. Personal conference.	Withdrew self; parent initiated.	Unknown.
WEST	10	1 probation notification; untold number of phone calls; withdrawal letter.	Parental influence.	Unknown
WEST	10	One phone call. Withdrawal letter. Personal conference.	Non-attendance. Family problems.	Unknown.
WEST	10	1 phone call. Withdrawal letter. Personal conference.	Non-attendance. Family problems.	Unknown.
WEST	10	1 phone call. Withdrawal letter. Personal conference.	No show second semester.	G.E.D.
WEST	10	1 phone call. Withdrawal letter.	Non-attendance.	Unknown.
WEST	10	1 phone call. Withdrawal letter.	Parental influence. Family problems.	G.E.D.
WEST	10	Personal conference. Withdrawal letter.	Alcohol, community influence.	Unknown.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SCHOOL	GRADE	PARENT CONTACTED? (Mail/phone/pers. conf)	REASON FOR EXIT?	DESTINATION
WEST	11	1 phone call. Withdrawal letter. Personal conference.	Non-attendance. Dropped out twice, alcohol.	Unknown.
WEST	11	1 phone call; withdrawal letter. Personal conference.	Parental influence.	Unknown.
WEST	11	1 phone call; withdrawal letter. Personal conference.	Non-attendance. Alcohol, MYC.	ACS.
WEST	11	1 phone call; withdrawal letter. Personal conference.	No show second semester. Personal problems.	Unknown.
WEST	11	1 phone call; withdrawal letter. Personal conference.	Non-attendance. Personal problems.	Unknown.
WEST	11	1 phone call; withdrawal letter. Personal conference.	Non-attendance; truancy. Family.	SAVE referral.
WEST	11	1 phone call; withdrawal letter. Personal conference.	Non-attendance; truancy. Family.	Unknown.
WEST	11	1 phone call; withdrawal letter. Personal conference.	Non-attendance. Work, credit.	Unknown.
WEST	11	1 phone call; withdrawal letter.	Non-attendance. Community influence.	Kotzebue.
WEST	11	1 phone call; withdrawal letter.	Non-attendance. Community influence.	Unknown.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SCHOOL	GRADE	PARENT CONTACTED? (Mail/phone/pers. conf)	REASON FOR EXIT?	DESTINATION
WEST	12	1 phone call; withdrawal letter.	Non-attendance. Personal, academic.	CINA/GED
WEST	12	Personal conference.	Drugs.	GED.
WEST	12	Conferences.	Parental influence. School problems.	ACC diploma.
WEST	12	1 phone call; withdrawal letter.	Non-attendance. Alcohol.	Unknown.
WEST	12	1 phone call; withdrawal letter.	Academic difficulties; parental influence.	ACC diploma.
WEST	12	1 phone call; withdrawal letter.	No show second semester. Personal.	Whaley.
WEST	9	1 phone call; withdrawal letter.	Non-attendance. Family.	Steller next year.
WEST	9	1 phone call; withdrawal letter.	Non-attendance. Family.	AWAIC, correspondence.
WEST	9	Progress report; parental contact. Personal conference.	Non-attendance. Friends, drugs.	AWAIC; correspondence.
WEST	9	1 phone call; withdrawal letter.	Non-attendance.	Out of state.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SCHOOL	GRADE	PARENT CONTACTED? (Mail/phone/pers. conf)	REASON FOR EXIT?	DESTINATION
WEST	9	1 phone call; withdrawal letter.	Non-attendance. Psychological problems.	Unknown.
WEST	9	1 phone call; withdrawal letter.	Non-attendance. Student ran away from home and was not able to enter SEARCH due to space.	Unknown.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 7

Alaska Native Graduates

SCHOOL	YEAR 1981	1982	1983	1984
Bartlett	7	14	14	12
Chugiak	10	7	9	16
Dimond	15	14	14	22
East	20	24	19	31
Service	13	12	15	21
West	19	26	29	34
Career Center	2			
McLaughlin	1			
Save I	9	14	7	14
Save II	4	3	4	5
Steller	2			
Total	102	114	111	155